

We had a light lunch in the lodge and then Geoff and I spent about an hour climbing a little way above the 6000 feet level. We stuck to the paved pathways and actually crossed the Pacific Crest Scenic Trail – with its marker indicating Canada as 550 miles north and Mexico 2108 miles to the south. We also watched skiers and snowboarders on a stretch of about ½ mile of packed snow which apparently is essentially man-made since it is below the normal snow line. Not much further up from our position, however, was the true snow line at about 7000 feet. This is the only mountain in the USA to boast year-round skiing and those out today certainly had some wonderful weather; clear blue skies and a temperature even at this altitude that was well into the seventies.



We took the direct route back to Hood River which is itself very scenic and got some more glimpses of the mountain from a different angle and in some different lights. We were back at the hotel by 4pm so I went for a 2 ½ mile walk along the waterfront where hundreds of people (local and tourist) were enjoying every kind of water sport or simply picnicking on the shore. At this altitude (essentially sea level) the temperature was probably about 90F.

Tonight we ate at Nora's Table in town. Molly and I had eaten there a year ago and enjoyed it and tonight's meal was also good – and relatively very cheap.



## Sunday August 12

We once again had breakfast on the patio at the hotel restaurant on what was forecast to be a very warm day. About 10:30 we set off east to visit the Bonneville Dam (initially built in the thirties) and fish hatchery and then on to the Columbia River Scenic Drive.

*Bonneville Lock and Dam consists of several run-of-the-river dam structures that together complete a span of the Columbia River between the U.S. states of Oregon and Washington at River Mile 146. The dam is located 40 miles east of Portland, Oregon, in the Columbia River Gorge. The primary functions of Bonneville Lock and Dam are electrical power generation and river navigation. The dam was built and is managed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Electrical power generated at Bonneville is distributed by the Bonneville Power Administration. Bonneville Lock and Dam is named for Army Capt. Benjamin Bonneville, an early explorer credited with charting much of the Oregon Trail. The Bonneville Dam Historic District was designated a National Historic Landmark District in 1987.*



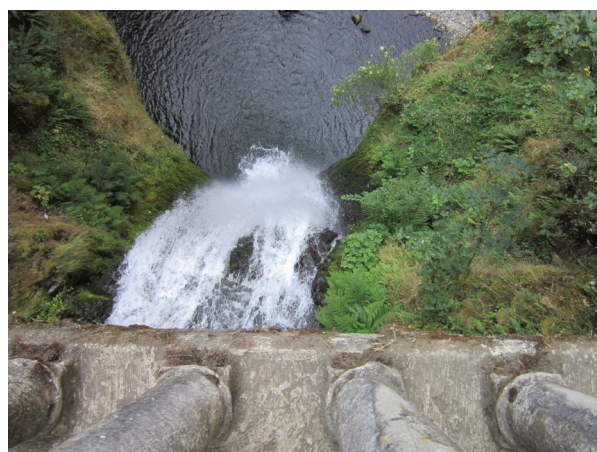
The tour of the dam (including the turbine house) and the Lewis and Clark film shown at the Visitor Center were very interesting and informative. Molly and I found the Lewis and Clark film particularly interesting as we had seen all the places shown during our driving trip of the Trail several years ago. The fish hatchery got just a cursory visit as the salmon spawning season doesn't start until next month and there was no activity in the main building but we were able to view a number of large fish going up the fish ladder at the counting point. We also saw the very large sturgeon that are housed within the fish hatchery grounds.



After a light lunch in Cascade Locks we started the drive along the Columbia Gorge and visited three of the major waterfalls on the route, including the 620 feet high Multnomah Falls and the magnificent Bridal Veil Falls, the latter requiring a half mile round trip hike from the parking area. Finally we climbed to the Crown Point Vista House, a beautiful building built in the thirties, for the absolutely stunning views of the Columbia River stretching at least twenty miles east and west.



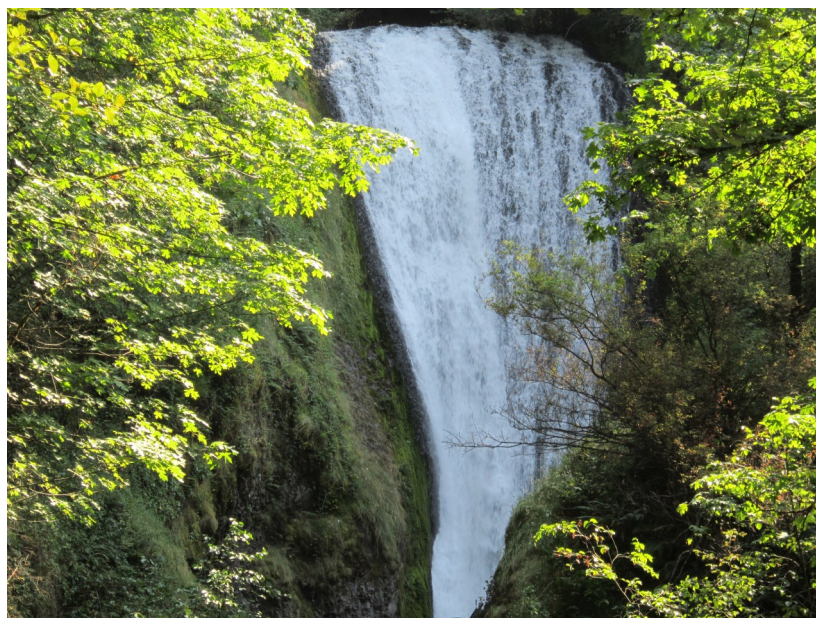




**Multnomah Falls**



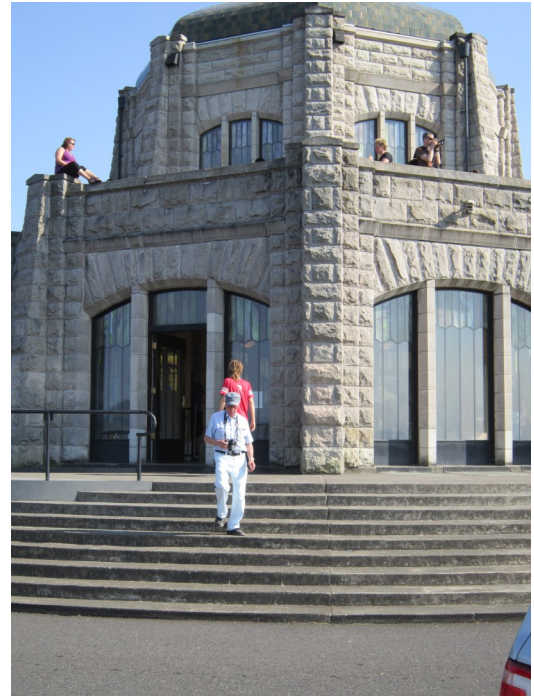
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***Crown Point Vista***



We then drove back via the expressway and convened for dinner about 7pm. We ate at the Stonehedge Gardens restaurant which lies on the western edge of Hood River and is a charming multi-room house set well back from the road in its huge grounds. We decided on the patio for dining (one of seven at the establishment) and enjoyed an excellent meal with great service on a pleasantly mild summer evening.

### **Monday August 13**



***Above: A stop on the Clackamas River***

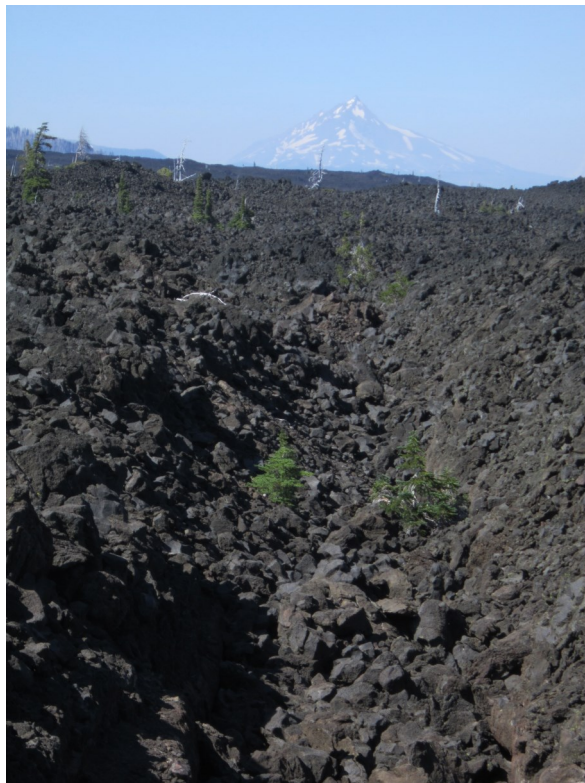
We checked out of the Hood River hotel around 9:30 and were soon on our way to Bend in central Oregon. We drove west on I-84 until we were about 16 miles east of Portland and then headed south to the small town of Estacada where we made our first – and last – coffee stop. It was then about 100 miles south following the [Clackamas River](#) through heavily forested land with occasional glimpses of snow-capped mountains until we reached US 22 where we turned east.

***Right: Our first view of the lava fields***

At the town of Sisters we turned back west (we could have cut off a corner but missed a turn) to the McKenzie Pass lava fields at an elevation of 5300 feet. This is a 50 square mile black lava rock area with very little vegetation despite being the result of an eruption of Mt Washington over 2700 years ago. Patches of green lichen cover many rocks and there are very occasional small trees and shrubs but for the most part the landscape is as barren as it must have been right after the eruption. A half mile paved path through a small part of the field provided a good overview and many information boards so we were able to identify the lava flows, the tunnels and the slow shaping of a new landscape.







***The stark lava fields around Belknap Crater Viewpoint are superb examples of shield volcanoes. To the north, the 1,700-foot thick complex extends five miles in diameter and includes 8,877-foot Big Belknap Crater and Little Belknap Crater's 6,305-foot cinder cone. The latter was the origin of the immense lava fields in the foreground; its eruption about 3,000 years ago discharged molten rock 12 miles westward. These lava fields and cinder cones, once a training site for moon-bound astronauts, are from the most recent lava flow in the continental U.S., about 1,500 to 30,000 years ago, and are among the most impressive examples of volcanic activity in the United States.***

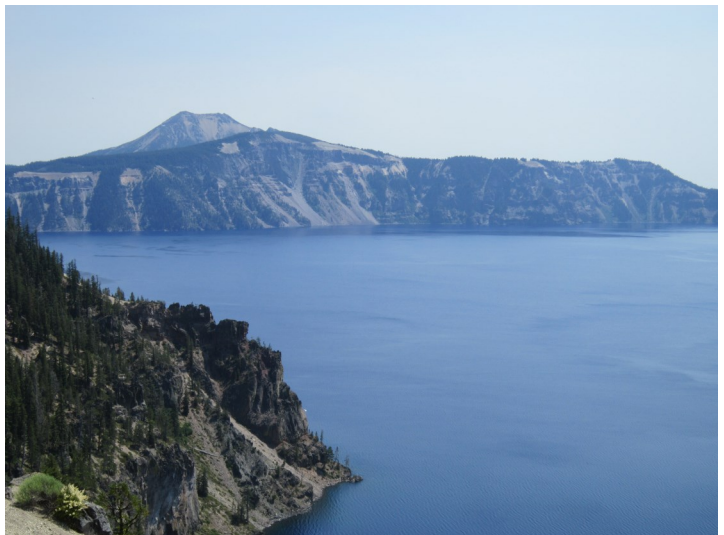
From the lava area it was an easy one hour run into Bend where we checked in, cleaned up and went to meet Dave and Kathy Wortman (old workmate from GE) for a very pleasant dinner in the Old Mill district by the river. It was still pleasantly warm after dinner as we took a short stroll along the river bank walkway.



**Tuesday August 14**

We left Bend after breakfast on another warm and sunny morning to head (eventually) for Medford, OR but with our major sightseeing stop at Crater Lake. However, we started out by taking Dave Wortman's advice and heading west from Bend towards Mt Bachelor (about 30 miles) and then south passing a number of beautiful lakes until we re-joined the main route to Crater Lake. On this slight diversion we had excellent views of Mt Bachelor (up close) and more distant views of the Three Sisters Mountains to the northwest. We also passed a number of lava fields similar to the one we had visited yesterday as well as spending a good deal of time in heavily forested land.

We had lunch at a small diner when we reached the main road again and then proceeded on the climb to Crater Lake – an elevation change of over 3000 feet. Once in the National Park we soon joined the Rim Road which goes all the way round Crater Lake, often hugging the lake side (although several hundred feet above the water) but dipping below the crater rim and several miles away from the lake at times.





Crater Lake was formed 7700 years ago with the eruption of Mt Mazama which to that point had been a 12,000 feet high peak. Now the highest point around the crater rim is somewhat above 8000 feet and the crater is about 3000 feet deep – 2000 of which are filled with water. The lake averages 5 miles in diameter so one can only imagine the explosion as a “chunk” measuring about 1 1/2 miles high by 5 miles in diameter “suddenly” disappeared as ash and lava. The ash cloud here is estimated as being over a hundred times greater than that created by the eruption of Mt Vesuvius, itself almost ten times that of Mt St Helens. It is estimated that it could have covered the entire state of Oregon to a depth of 6 inches.

So, the statistics for this lake and its surroundings are staggering but it is perhaps even more the simple beauty and almost symmetrical proportions of the crater, the lake and the ridge that creates the “Wow!” in its visitors. In addition, a slight detour from the ridge road takes the visitor to another example of the way nature can create formations at least as spectacular and interesting as anything man can do. **The Pinnacles** are tall (perhaps as high as 100 feet) cones of pumice that have been produced as fumaroles created gas pipes in slowly moving sediment from volcanic eruptions creating solid walls around a hollow core. As the sediment around these points either drifted away or was eroded away over time, giant up-turned cones have been formed to create a series of Disneyland-like castle spires in gray and red.



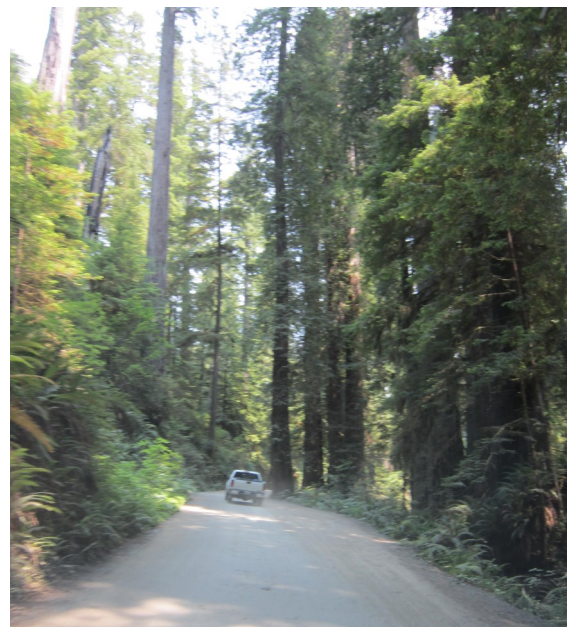
We had one last look at the crater and the lake from the main visitor center on the south shore before driving the final eighty miles to Medford. It was about 6:30 when we checked in which gave us sufficient time for a nap/clean-up/read before leaving for a Thai dinner at a restaurant a few miles from the hotel. The service was hurried but the food was good.

### Wednesday August 16

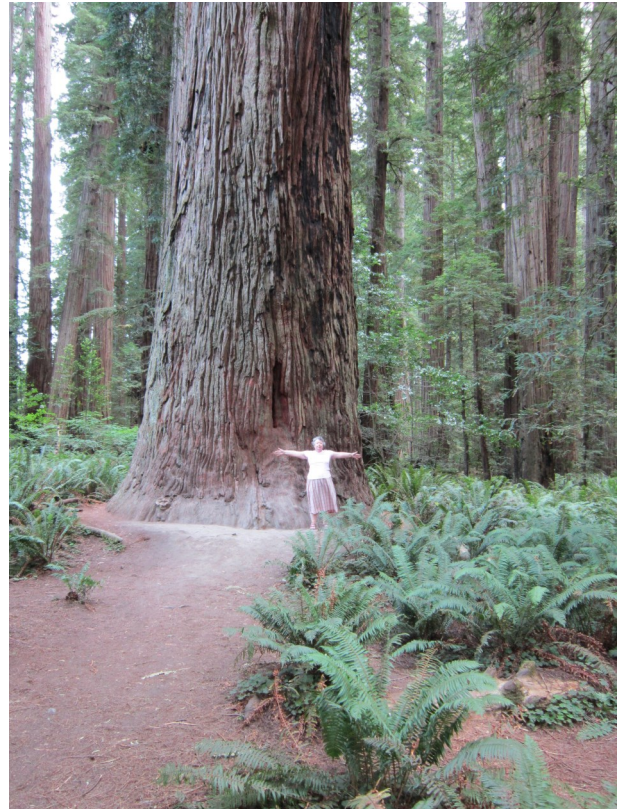
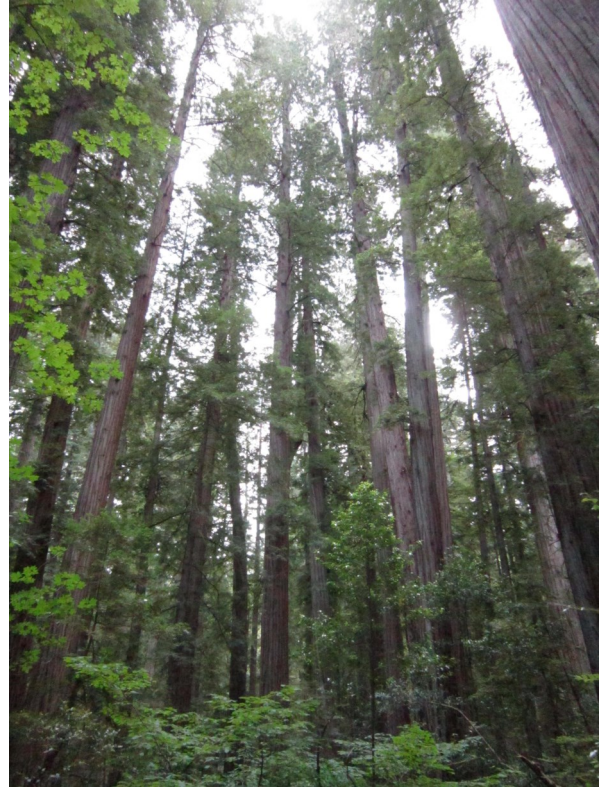


We left Medford and drove about 20 miles north on I-5 to Grants Pass where we turned south and headed to the California border. Shortly beyond that we came to Crescent City which was the last town of any size before the Redwoods so we stopped at Starbucks for coffee and a pastry.

At the local visitor center, Molly was given advice on the best sights in the three Redwood State and National Parks in the area and it turned out that one drive that came highly recommended required that we actually reverse our tracks a little. However, it was worth the time as we had a wonderful drive on an old stage coach road through the Jedediah Smith Park which took us up close and personal with many of the giant trees.







The road was unpaved for much of its nine mile length but was very navigable and it also featured a "half mile" (we thought it was significantly more) well-trodden trail amongst the Redwoods.

Many of these trees were over 200 feet tall and the highest can reach 360 feet tall and have a diameter of fifteen feet.

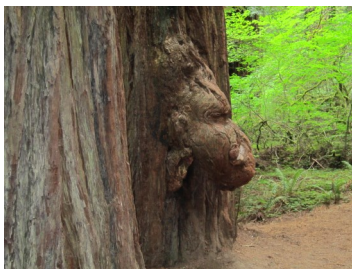


Many are 600 years old or more and the oldest is estimated at 2000 years old. As with Crater Lake which we saw yesterday, the numbers are staggering but to walk amongst these tallest trees on earth is even more awe-inspiring.

From the Jedediah Smith Park we drove south again to the Lady Bird Johnson trail (1 ½ miles) which was dedicated to the former First Lady for her work in maintaining and preserving the natural beauty of many parts of the US.



## ***A misty view of the Pacific Ocean on our Drive through the Coastal Redwood Parks***



***A fine example of a  
Redwood burl on the  
Path through the  
Lady Bird Johnson Trail***





This self-guided walk had a brochure which explained in great (and somewhat flowery prose) detail the life-cycle of the Old Coastal Redwood forests; their ecology, history and prognosis. Enlightened visionaries as early as 1902 had petitioned the State to set aside areas to preserve these giants at a time when the logging industry still had three quarters of a century ahead of it in this area. Obviously progress was slow towards the establishment of the National Parks of today but the 1960s saw a significant effort at preserving the Redwoods for future generations, which eventually led to these jointly operated State and National Parks.

Unfortunately our time was limited and about 6 pm we started the final part of our journey to Eureka, CA for our overnight stop. Despite our late arrival we were able to get a dinner reservation at the Carter House restaurant where Molly and I had eaten a couple of times and enjoyed a very good, leisurely meal.

One other interesting fact for this day – we felt about a dozen drops of rain, the first of the trip. And, when we arrived in Eureka it was downright chilly with an overnight low expected near 50F.

#### Thursday August 16

After breakfast at the hotel we picked up a guide to the old Victorian homes that are prevalent in Eureka – all built with the early logging days' money. We drove around several streets and caught quick views of many beautiful wooden structures in a variety of designs. Most seemed to have been kept in very good condition and the woodwork features and the colors made for some very attractive homes.



On reaching the waterfront we continued our tour on foot and covered a few downtown streets where there were some equally impressive commercial buildings, again from the turn of the last century. Obviously the logging industry had been extremely profitable. With the virtual end of the logging industry in this part of California and a similar decline in fishing from here, it is difficult to see what keeps this city of 30,000 going. It is, of course, a jumping off point for the Redwoods and that must bring in a number of tourists in the season, although one suspects that few view Eureka as more than a place to sleep for one night.



***Eureka: Famous for its Victorian buildings and Murals***



Despite that, the Victorian mansions are a real attraction and the city appears to have done a good job in highlighting that aspect for those that have an interest. Most of the downtown area is on the National Historic Register and the Carson Mansion at the north end of town is world-renowned and a wonderful example of design and construction from an era when money was plentiful and publicly displayed in its buildings.



*The Carson Mansion and "The Pink Lady" across the street,  
Built as a wedding gift to his son.*

We left Eureka (and temperatures still less than 60F) about 1:30 and began the 130 mile drive to Redding. This was a very scenic route over the coastal range, although the twisty roads, frequent construction hold-ups and a couple of rest stops caused the journey to take four hours – a period during which the temperature increased to 104F.

Tonight we gave Geoff his first sample of Mexican food at a restaurant about 4 miles from the hotel. It was determined to be "good but very filling" – and very economical.

#### **Friday August 17**

We decided to take about a 100 mile detour on our way to Sacramento (about 180 miles direct) to visit Lassen Volcanic National Park. Although none of us had ever been, the park literature suggested that it was like a mini-Yellowstone with mud pots, sulfur springs and fumaroles. It also said that the mountain that caused all this last erupted in a period between 1914 and 1921 – "just yesterday" in geological terms.

We drove east from Redding about 50 miles, climbing steadily to the north Park Entrance at an elevation of about 5000 feet. As soon as we turned in, however, we were confronted with a sign indicating that the road we wanted to follow through the park to get to the south entrance (26 miles away) was closed! The reason, we were told at the ranger station was that there were 700 firemen camped in the area fighting the forest fire that had started here on July 23. Of course we hadn't heard of this particular fire (there are almost twenty of note ongoing in the west) although the number of fire trucks we passed on our way up here should have given us a hint.

Anyway, there was nothing to do but to retrace our drive about 20 miles and then travel by winding, narrow roads around the western end of the park and then go east again to the south entrance – a drive of about 1 ½ hours. Since we already had plans to meet our family in Sacramento this evening, our already tight schedule was compressed even further and we were able to go only about eight miles into the park. That was the time restraint – but the fire crews would have prevented us going more than another few miles in any event.

The good news is that the Park (the part that we saw and presumably the bit we didn't) was absolutely spectacular. There were indeed a few fumaroles and sulfur springs visible (certainly smell-able) from the road and there were sections of the steep slopes that were reminiscent of the Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone, although on a much smaller scale. Many of the better viewing (and smelling) areas were along trails away from the road and we certainly didn't have time to take those hikes today but no-one seemed to mind, especially as we were now at an elevation over 8000 feet and with temperatures well into the eighties.



But the views of the mountains, lakes, streams within the Park and the long range vistas in all directions made the extra driving worth every mile. It certainly is a spot to put on our list to visit and spend more time here on future western trips – hopefully without the fire issue.



We drove essentially non-stop on to Sacramento (one Starbucks stop) and actually arrived at our hotel about 5pm. This gave us a couple of hours to catch our breath and clean up before meeting Christopher, Cyndi and Samantha for dinner at Tuk Tuk, a Thai restaurant that we have enjoyed several times in the past. Tonight was no exception and, as usual, Samantha was very good throughout the meal and deserved her “ice cream” treat at the nearby parlor afterwards.

#### **Saturday August 18**

We walked to Starbucks for a very light breakfast as we were meeting Cyndi, Christopher and Samantha for lunch at noon. We spent the rest of the morning relaxing at the hotel and met at Fresh Choice for lunch with the family.

Geoff, Molly and I then spent a little time in Old Town Sacramento and took a look at the Capitol building before returning to the hotel for the balance of the afternoon.



At five, we drove to Christopher’s home for a swim in their pool which was followed by a barbecue. We left about 10:30 to return to the hotel after a very pleasant evening.





### Sunday August 19

We checked out at 10am and drove to meet Christopher, Cyndi and Samantha for brunch at the Red Rabbit in midtown Sacramento. We enjoyed a good meal and our final 1 ½ hours with Sammy for this trip and then set off on the drive to San Francisco. The drive along I-80 was clear for the most part although there were a couple of slow spots before we got into the city. However, with the GPS help we managed to locate the hotel at Fisherman's Wharf via what seemed like a very circuitous route from the freeway – but at least it avoided some of the very steep hills here.

We turned in the rental car (right next door to the hotel) and then walked around Fisherman's Wharf for an hour or so – along with thousands of other tourists on a sunny afternoon. The temperature here was about 40F lower than it had been in Sacramento but it felt very pleasant strolling along the waterfront.

Tonight we ate at Alioto's seafood restaurant with a view over the fishing fleet harbor and out to the San Francisco Bay – the latter unfortunately mostly obscured by the marine layer which came in late afternoon.



### Monday August 20



We had breakfast at the hotel (poor) and then purchased tickets for our hop on/hop off tours that would take up the rest of the day. The morning downtown tour took us along the Embarcadero, through the financial district and the main shopping streets to Chinatown. Here we got off and had a leisurely stroll through the largest Chinatown in America and admired the many Chinese goods in the shops. By now it was sunny and relatively mild (around 60F) so the walk and the ride on the open top deck of the bus were very pleasant. We got on the bus for a short ride back to Pier 39 where we had a light lunch.





*San Francisco  
City Tour*





## ***The ever-changing weather in San Francisco Bay***

In the afternoon (actually it was 3pm before we left) we took the Golden Gate Bridge and Sausalito portion of the tour. Unfortunately the marine layer fog obscured most of the bridge much of the time but we did get occasional views of the piers and deck and brief glimpses of the towers. Despite the clouds/mist, the visit to the bridge was a “must do” and was perhaps made a little more interesting with its ever-changing picture.

In Sausalito (an expensive town that had been the artist colony for the Hippies of the sixties) we got off the bus again for a walk around the very pleasant downtown streets and to admire the magnificent views across the San Francisco Bay. This side of the water the weather was warm and sunny but the city came in and out of view as the clouds shifted.



We decided to omit the last portion of the bus tour and returned to Fisherman's Wharf via the ferry. It was quite choppy and windy on the water and the walk back to the hotel was cool – but still we saw no rain. Our final dinner together was a very informal but enjoyable meal at Joe's Crab Shack. The name probably describes the ambiance as well as I could but the seafood is very good.

### **Tuesday August 21**

We had breakfast at IHop, a short walk from the hotel, and then spent about an hour in a small but very informative National Park Service museum on the maritime history of San Francisco and the Bay area. We then returned to the hotel, finished packing and checked out at noon. At 12:30 we were picked up by the taxi which took Geoff to the airport for his 5pm flight to London and then took Molly and I to the airport Marriott. We were staying there in readiness for our early morning flight home on Wednesday. We ate in the hotel restaurant and it was a surprisingly good meal with a nice view of the landing aircraft.



### **Wednesday August 22**

We were up at 5am and caught the 5:30 hotel shuttle bus to the airport for our 7:45 flight to Los Angeles. We arrived at LAX about 9:15 only to find that our connecting flight to Cincinnati was delayed by an hour until 1pm for "mechanical problems". The agent in the Delta Lounge must have had concerns about the announced delay as she booked us on an alternative flight via Salt Lake City "just in case".

As it turned out she was correct and it was soon announced that our direct flight was on a four hour delay – so we quickly switched to the backup. This got us into Cincinnati a few minutes after ten so we were home about 3 hours later than planned but at least on the same day!

So ended our driving holiday down the west coast - one Canada Province (British Columbia), three US states (Washington, Oregon, California), 20 days and 2300 miles (all but about 200 by car). Another great trip.











